

August 13, 2003

Dr. Craig Ramey, Director
Center for Health and Education
Georgetown University
3700 Reservoir Road Northwest
Washington, DC 20057-1107

Dear Dr. Ramey:

Please accept this letter on behalf of the State of Mississippi as our being interested in serving as an expansion site for your work with the *Right from Birth* and *Birth to School* series and your work in improving the quality of childcare. I understand that you are seeking funding from the Department of Health and Human Services to expand your work in these areas. Mississippi stands ready to partner with you once again in this endeavor.

Effective early childhood development is critical to narrowing the achievement gap of our early learners and preparing them for lifelong learning. As you know, Mississippi Educational Television, the Mississippi Department of Human Services and the Early Childhood Institute at Mississippi State University have played integral roles in the collaborative partnerships that led to the development of *Right from Birth* and *Birth to School*. My office, via the Department of Human Services, has partnered with the Barksdale Reading Institute to work with Dr. Sharon Lynn Kagan and Dr. Rick Brandon to conduct an early childhood needs assessment that will identify what is needed in order to improve childcare in our state, what such improvements would cost, and what internal and external resources exist to help pay for those improvements.

Mississippi looks forward to working with you as you seek to expand your work and efforts on behalf of our youngest citizens. Please contact Kelly Riley of my staff at 601-359-2528 if you require any additional information.

Very truly yours,

RONNIE MUSGROVE

RM:klr